

## REGION 6 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOPIC: ITC Tank Fire

DATE: May 22, 2019

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PURPOSE/ACTION NEEDED: For Information

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### BACKGROUND:

On Sunday, March 17, 2019, Intercontinental Terminals Company (ITC) discovered a tank of naphtha on fire within a tank farm of 15 tanks. EPA deployed two On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) to integrate into the existing unified command and provide EPA resources and assets to the response. By the next day multiple tanks were on fire, threatening all the tanks within the farm, as well as other tank farms in close proximity. The initial fire was extinguished on Tuesday, March 19; however, a subsequent fire began on Friday, March 22, as well as a failure of the secondary containment which resulted in a massive spill of thousands of barrels product/fire water/foam into Tucker Bayou and the Houston Ship Channel. A Shelter-in-place was issued for the residents and businesses of Deer Park during the initial fire, as well as the subsequent fire, which resulted in the collapse, burning, or damage to all 15 tanks.

On March 23, 2019, in consultation with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), EPA issued ITC an Administrative Order requiring the facility to comply with a broad Scope of Work, prescribing such efforts as securing the facility to prevent further discharge of chemicals, conducting spill response, removal of the discharged chemicals and efforts to prevent further hazardous air releases. On April 17, 2019, at the request of ITC, with concurrence from TCEQ, and pursuant to EPA's emergency response authorities, EPA authorized the treatment and discharge of the incident-related wastewater from one specific tank through the on-site wastewater treatment system.

### CURRENT STATUS:

EPA continues to oversee ITC's response to the tank farm and the Bayou and Ship Channel, coordinating activities with state and local partners, including the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Harris County Pollution Control Services. ITC has removed all material they are able to remove until the tanks are deconstructed. ITC has begun the deconstruction of five (5) primary tanks with remaining sludge/product that may have benzene vapor emissions. The remaining ten (10) tanks will be addressed in a later phase.

- Deconstruction of tank 80-15 (pygas) began on May 13, 2019 with hydraulic shears. On May 14, 2019 at 1140, a flash fire occurred at Tank 80-15 during deconstruction processes. The fire was extinguished quickly. ITC conducted an assessment of the response to the flare up and reconfigured resources to address possible future flare ups.
- On May 19, 2019, ITC began deconstruction of tank 80-14 (pygas), and began to stage scrap metal on the former tank floor of tank 80-15.
- ITC continued to discharge from their wastewater treatment plant at a flow rate of approximately 60-100 gallons per minute.
- On May 21, 2019, based on recent monitoring data and ongoing Site activities, EPA demobilized TAGA and decreased EPA's participation in handheld air monitoring activities. ITC will continue air monitoring at current resource levels.
- As of May 17, 2019, SCAT has identified all shoreline segments as meeting endpoints except 0.88 miles in Tucker Bayou (Division B).

### ENVIRONMENTAL/PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS:

During the fires, as well as the response/recovery phase, emissions of benzene from the spilled product continued to cause concern for response workers, neighboring facilities, and communities downwind of the facility. Air monitoring by EPA, TCEQ, Harris County, and ITC were conducted 24-

hours a day to provide sufficient data to local officials to assist in making protective action decisions for their communities, as well as ensuring emergency responders were adequately protected.

There were several areas of concern from the spilled product, including County recreational areas, Texas monuments and parks, and environmentally sensitive areas. Booms, product recovery, shoreline assessments, and water sampling were coordinated to ensure the protection of these areas.

#### **REGULATORY/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS:**

- ITC is subject to both the Spill Prevention and Control Countermeasures (SPCC) regulations under the Clean Water Act (CWA), as well as the Risk Management Program (RMP) provisions under the Clean Air Act (CAA).
- The response/recovery to the fire and resultant spill was conducted under the provisions of the National Contingency Plan (NCP), as well as the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

#### **COMMUNITY CONCERNS:**

- Harris County is conducting a health consultation for the communities surrounding the facility, using the data collected during air monitoring/water sampling. This consultation is coordinated with Texas Health officials and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).



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